

THIS MINISTRY

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The thought suggested itself to my mind in reading Paul's second letter to the Corinthian brethren. Jesus in his Galilean ministry, came to Nazareth, and as was his custom, went into the Synagogue to worship, and in reading introduced himself as the sent of God, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and receiving of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, Luke 4; 18-19. Notice the things enumerated as entering into his ministry—The qualification, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," The earthly preachers were to "tarry at Jerusalem until imbued with power from on high" this, he declares to be anointing for the ministry, enabling him "to preach the gospel to the poor." "The poor ye have with you always." "The broken-hearted," "The captives" to sin need deliverance now as well as then. Men are as blind to day to their soul needs as they ever were, and need to be led out into liberty and freedom in Christ. "This ministry," committed to the servants of God is to do it if ever done, "Not with excellency of speech," but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord, and ourselves, your servants for Jesus sake."—"We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greek's foolishness," but unto the "called the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The quotations clearly teach the importance and the sacredness of "this ministry." Paul declares that it demands the renunciation of the hidden things of dishonesty, craftiness and deceitfulness.

Purity of heart, cleanliness in life, a walk commending itself to the consciences of all men. Such a ministry the world needs to-day.

A thoroughly consecrated self-sacrificing spirit-filled servant of God.

Have we such? Yes, and God is owning and blessing their labors. The world needs more of them. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he send more of them into the fields which are white unto the harvest.

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FISHERS OF MEN. MARK 1:17

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Jesus was walking by the sea shore near where Peter and Andrew were fishing. He stopped and said to them "Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men." And they left their nets and followed him.

1. The Master is calling men today to higher things in life. He says to all, "There is something better than fishing nets and tax receipts; something better than houses and lands, sumptuous feasts or fine apparel. There is something better than the daily drudgery of the earthly calling. Life is

more than meat and the body more than raiment. "A man's life consisteth not of the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

The physical man must need be cared for, but more important is it that the mind be trained and developed, and far more important than either is the care of the moral nature. For tho he be ever so learned and ever so strong what is a man without character?

Jesus opens the window of life toward heaven and reveals the joys and motives of the kingdom of God. This is the work of the churches. The masses are yet earthly, sensual and devilish. The best country on earth spends a hundred times over as much for liquor and tobacco as for the moral education of the people. Even in the church there is more concern for earthly than for heavenly treasures. Come ye after me, says Jesus, and I will make you to see a new world in which love rules rather than selfishness and where goodness is counted as riches rather than gold and silver. Come ye after me and I will cause you to find things so much better than the traps of daily toil that soon you will be crying "Lord show me the Father and it sufficeth us."

2. Successful fishing requires means and methods. Tact and skill are essentials. In the higher work of soul-winning the Spirits' part does not preclude the necessity of work on the part of men. We pray for daily bread, and then search among earth's products the things which are good for food and take from God's bonds our supply. We pray for healing and then search for the beneficial remedies, finding in an increasing knowledge of the laws of health and the nature of diseases and the healing properties of herbs, an increasing safe-guard against disease. Just so "no man cometh unto the Father except the Father draw him," yet to us is the command given "Go preach the gospel," "Go work in my vineyard," "Go fish for men." The church needs to plan its work. It needs to study methods of successful work. It needs to work thru its auxiliary societies and all these should have definite policies for their work. God uses those who work with him rather than those who fold their arms and trust in him to do it all.

3. Successful fishing requires bait. If we would win souls there must be something about us which will win them. What is this? Is it costly churches with fine organs and stylish worshippers? Not so. Is it artistic singing and eloquent preaching and magnificent collections? Not so. "And I, if I be lifted up will draw men unto me." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another." There is nothing that can take the place of consistent Christian living on the part of professed disciples. No revival can succeed where this is lacking. No church can be fruitless where it is found. A minister asked a convert which one of his sermons had caused his conversion. "Oh, It was not your preaching" was the reply, "It was the godly life of my sainted mother that converted me." Pay

those debts brother, forgive those wrongs, go make peace with your neighbor, humble yourself before God and let your light so shine that men may see your good works. Then will they glorify their Father who is in heaven.

4. There are times when the fisherman does all that he can and yet fails. The time is not propitious. There are times when the most earnest efforts for souls seems in vain. The harvest is not ripe.

Successful soul-winning requires patience and self-sacrifice. God has borne long with the world, we should not despair of it. Not one day's sunshine nor two brings the spring-time with its flowers or the summer with its harvest. Let the sunshine of love beam on. The heart of clay which hardens under the first shining may melt under the more intense heat. Work on. The April showers will bring not April, but May flowers. Work on, and be not weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

5. Above all to be fishers of men requires that we shall learn of him who more than any man has won the hearts of men to himself. Napoleon longed for the glory of the Caesars and sought it with the sword. Jesus sought to do the will of his Father in heaven and by his life of love revealed to the world a kingdom which is eternal. Let us follow him and learn of him as he goes about doing good; learn of him as he shows compassion on the aimless multitude; learn of him as he puts away the temptations of power and pleasure and applause; learn of him as he stoops to serve and as he weeps over his friend; learn of him as he tarries often alone with the Father, as he forgives his enemies and as he gives his life in the end revealing his great love. Learn of him and he will make you to know joy and peace and faith and power as you win others to the higher life in the kingdom of God.

Home Circle

Don't Worry

Don't worry if you cannot have
The world as you desire,
But try to make the best of life,
And happiness inspire;
A cheerful smile and sweet content
Add sunshine unto life,
And have the greatest power to
Dispel its care and strife.

'Tis smiles that drive from life its gloom,
And not sad worriment;
So let our lives in happiness,
Not discontent, be spent;
Look up to God to find his light
To brighten every day,
And when the world seems to abuse,
Just look another way.

And find the sunshine on beyond
The clouds that intervene,
Until the darkness passes by
And you the light have seen.
Don't worry, for to every cloud
A silver lining shines,
And with the sorrows of the soul
God's solace e'er combines.

—Martha Shepard Lippincott.